

GREATER MANCHESTER INTEGRATED TRANSPORT AUTHORITY**REPORT FOR RESOLUTION:**

COMMITTEE: BUS NETWORK AND PTE SERVICES
DATE: 7TH AUGUST 2009
SUBJECT: HEYWOOD LOCAL LINK DEMAND RESPONSIVE SERVICE
REPORT OF: INTERIM BUS AND RAIL DIRECTOR, GMPTE

PURPOSE OF REPORT

To note progress of the Heywood Local Link service and agree to continue to fund the Heywood Local Link.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Members are recommended to:-

- (a) Welcome the success to date of the Heywood Local Link service.
- (b) Agree continuation funding for the operation, development and promotion of the service from the 1st September 2009 as detailed in this report and the Part B Report on this agenda.
- (c) Receive further progress Reports as part of the six monthly DRT monitoring and evaluation process in October 2009.

BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

The Authority - Urban Bus Challenge: bid/progress reports (2003 to date).
Transport Network Committee – 27th March 2009

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HEYWOOD LOCAL LINK

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 A report was presented to the Authority's Transport Network Committee in March 2009 detailing proposals for the continuing the Heywood Local Link once the Urban Bus Challenge (UBC) grant funding ceased at the end of April 2009. Officers recommended moving from grant to contract to test the market.
- 1.2 Passenger figures and qualitative research prove that the HNHCT Local Link and associated community transport service have provided a good service for residents during the grant funding.
- 1.3 After delays arising from the need to clarify the effects of employment legislation on the proposed service operator, members approved a temporary extension of the existing service to 31st August 2009, on current terms and conditions.
- 1.4 Since then new tenders for service operation have been invited. This report details progress to date and also includes recommendations for the long term continuation of Heywood Local Link.

2 PROGRESS OF THE SCHEME TO DATE.

- 2.1 From 2002, using New Deal for Communities (NDC) pump-prime funding, a community transport organisation, Heywood New Heart Community Transport (HNHCT) was set up. Community Transport group services have continued to operate successfully since the expiry of NDC funding in March 2008. In addition, HNHCT introduced and developed a door to door service, similar to Local Link.
- 2.2 After funding was successfully secured from UBC, NDC and the ITA a number of delivery outcomes was set to ensure that the service met the needs of local residents and did not abstract from existing commercial bus services.
- 2.4 Although on-going monitoring and evaluation took place throughout the project, separate reports on the whole HNHCT operation were commissioned by NDC and GMPTE. The NDC research concentrated on the agreed delivery outputs, inclusive of quantitative patronage levels and whether the overarching principles of the programme were met. The GMPTE survey was more qualitative, focusing on passenger satisfaction. Both these pieces of research were in addition to Local Link patronage data, supplied by the operator to GMPTE throughout the life of the scheme. The results of this monitoring and evaluation are attached at Appendix 1.
- 2.5 The Local Link service is performing well in providing a dedicated door to service in the Heywood area. An estimated 33,700 passengers were carried in the last

year at a cost of £2.96 per passenger trip. This compares well with GMPTE's current average cost per trip for Local Link of £4.71.

- 2.6 Discussions between HNHCT and GMPTE took place during 2008 to develop a business case to extend the grant arrangements beyond April 2009. However, GMPTE officers in agreement with HNHCT decided to invite tenders for the DRT service. A new designated DRT operating area for the service was designed and tenders were sent to all community transport operators, taxi operators and interested bus operators on the GMPTE approved tender list in November 2008. Due to difficulties discussed in the report to March TNC it was not possible to award a contract at the time and, since then, the service has been supported by the Authority through temporary extension of the existing grant agreement.

3. FUTURE OPERATION

- 3.1 The service has now been re-tendered to include the new service operating area, shown in the map in Appendix 2. Full details of the results are included in the Part B Changes to the Bus Network - Financial Implications report elsewhere on this agenda
- 3.2 The tender price received represents a 4.8% increase on the existing price set in January 2006, a slight reduction in real terms as inflation has risen by 3.6% in the same period (Source: National Statistics). This represents good value in view of increases in fuel costs, salary increases and vehicle maintenance costs.
- 3.3 Fare levels will be revised in line with the DRT fares report approved at 3rd April 2009 Policy Committee. The service will operate Monday to Friday 0530 to 2300, 0900 to 1700 on Saturdays and 0900 to 2300 on Sundays and Bank Holidays recognising local employment start time trends.
- 3.4 If agreed, officers will continue to evaluate and monitor the Local Link service and report findings to members as part of the six monthly DRT report process, the next Report to this committee will be October 2009.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 Originally funded by the NDC grant and subsequently jointly funded by DfT UBC monies obtained by the ITA and NDC, the Heywood Local Link has proven a valuable service to the residents of Heywood, meeting many of its original outputs, and continues to develop.
- 4.2 Following a re-tendering of the service and based on both qualitative and quantitative data, officers believe that the tender recommended in Part B represents good value for money.
- 4.3 Officers therefore recommend that the Heywood Local Link service contract is awarded for three years with a view of extending to five years if cost per

passenger continues to be competitive, satisfaction levels maintained and outputs achieved. Appendix 3 outlines the updated outputs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 See front sheet for recommendations

**M. C. R. RENSHAW
INTERIM BUS AND RAIL DIRECTOR**

Appendix 1: Results of Monitoring and Evaluation – All HNHCT Activities

1. Although on-going monitoring and evaluation took place throughout the project, two reports were commissioned by NDC and GMPTE respectively. The NDC research concentrated on the delivery outputs, inclusive of quantitative patronage levels and whether the overarching principles of the programme were met. The GMPTE survey was more qualitative, focusing on passenger satisfaction. Both these pieces of research were in addition to patronage data, supplied by the operator to GMPTE throughout the life of the scheme.
2. By the end of March 2008, when NDC funding ceased, HNHCT was operating 6 vehicles, employing 17 staff (13 drivers - 5 part-time plus 4 full-time office staff) plus an additional 3 casual drivers and 2 voluntary office staff, and providing a substantial community transport service to Heywood every day of the week including weekday early mornings from 5.30am and evenings until 10.30pm. Under Section 19 Permit legislation passengers have to register to use the service. The services offered at this time included:
 - Door to door transport services to Heywood residents; and
 - Group travel services either with or without a driver;
 - MIDAS driver training which develops the skills of local people and allows them to hire vehicles as a volunteer for group travel.

A number of variables, including 60+ free fares have meant that passenger figures have levelled in recent years.

3. Key characteristics of the service provided by HNHCT from 2004/5 until 2008/9 are set out in Table 1.

Table 1 – Passenger data	2004-05	2005-06	2006-07	2007- 08	2008-09	Total
Total registered passengers	1879	2472	3038	3372	4138	-
Total door to door journeys (single, one way)	17598	29360	34562	31544	30892	143956
• Employment	9768	17028	20538	17291	24022	88647
• Health	1665	2509	2425	1744	832	9175
• School/college	969	2301	2041	5043	1769	12123
• Leisure/social	3620	6291	7736	6052	3665	27364
• Shopping	1016	1193	1769	1366	256	5600
• Other	560	38	53	48	348	1047
Total group journeys (No of individual passenger trips)	Not recorded	Not recorded	1847	5138	7151	14136
Number of groups using group travel service	Not recorded	Not recorded	56	110	160	326
People completing MIDAS* training	40	38	23	47	10	158

* MiDAS is the Minibus Driver Awareness Scheme, which promotes a nationally recognised standard for the assessment and training of minibus drivers. It is a membership based scheme that has been designed to enhance minibus driving standards and promote the safer operation of minibuses.

4. The overall profile of Registered Passengers of HNHCT at the end of March 2008 is set out in Table 2.

Table 2 – Passenger Profile

Age group (years)	Male	Female	Total	%
0-21	287	370	657	20
22-39	206	270	476	14
40-59	216	397	613	19
60-79	294	668	962	29
80+	158	448	606	18
Total	1161 35%	2153 65%	3314	100

5. Since the interim evaluation carried out in summer 2007 there has been:
- Continued increase in the number of members at an average rate of 1% per month. Approximately 40% of members are from the NDC area;
 - A reduction in the number of vehicles operating in Heywood from 7 to 6, due to legislative changes. The displaced vehicle is now being used for the Volunteer Driver Scheme, supported by the ITA as part of the Rochdale Partnership for Older Peoples project (POPPs), and is continuing to generate revenue for HNHCT.
 - An improvement in efficiency as a result of improved software. This has reduced the impact of the loss of a vehicle from the fleet on the number of door to door journeys delivered.
 - A significant increase in group hiring of vehicles as a result of a marketing campaign to groups across the borough; utilising spare vehicles
 - Increase in contract work and opportunities for one off commercial jobs. Bids won before the end of March 2008 include - Heywood Distribution park shuttle service, Tetrosyl shuttle service, and RMBC special needs education.
 - Continued investment in staff training.
6. Table 3 outlines the NDC outputs that were achieved as part of the original delivery plan.

Table 3 - Outputs

Output	Approved 2006	Achieved 2008
Jobs created	6	11
Jobs preserved	8	9.5
Number from NDC area accessing employment	200	200
No fares taken for access to social/leisure facilities	22,500	21,500
No. fares taken for access to medical facilities	7,500	5,215
People trained obtaining qualifications	300	226
No of people accessing training	50	45
Individuals involved in voluntary work	6	8

7. During September 2008, GMPTE commissioned a research company to explore trip purpose and passenger satisfaction levels with HNHCT. Of those passengers responding to the survey 36% of trips were to hospital, 32% of trips to leisure / recreation /non food shopping and 19% of trips were to and from employment.
8. Satisfaction levels with the service are extremely high; with 92% of those surveyed either very satisfied or fairly satisfied with the service. The following satisfaction levels were also cited;
- Ease of getting on and off the vehicle 99%
 - The standard of driving 98%
 - Journey time 98%
 - Vehicle cleanliness 98%
 - The driver 99%
 - Being collected within a 20 minute time frame 94%

Satisfaction levels with the booking process were also high.

- Staff 96%
- Accuracy of information 94%
- Access to operator 96%

HEYWOOD LOCAL LINK OPERATING AREA



Appendix 3 - Delivery Plan Outcomes 2009-2011

1 People from Heywood will have access to transport at unsocial hours which is currently not met by provision from GMPTE. This will increase their opportunities for employment and training. It will also provide opportunities to access social and leisure facilities as well as giving access to medical and health provision. Volunteers from the local area will be motivated to get involved and will receive training and support through the project to increase their capacity and confidence.

2 HNHCT will provide door-to-door service for those most vulnerable within the community. It will allay the fear of crime through the provision of safe, secure and reliable transport which will meet identified needs in the community.

3 Access to college provision will be provided via HNHCT which will provide the means for people to get to courses at times when commercial transport is not available. It will also provide accredited internal training to local people and volunteers/ workers from other community/voluntary sector groups who require training to drive or use a minibus. It will also encourage volunteers with the project to access training in order to meet the delivery needs of the project such as how to handle disabled people and customer care.

4 It will provide the means for young people to access leisure facilities and services as well as training. It will also provide opportunities for employment and volunteering.

5 There will be an emphasis on getting people to work who are on shift working patterns.

6 HNHCT will provide access to a full range of medical provision and facilities. It will provide door-to-door services for the elderly and those most vulnerable within the area.

7 Opportunities to employment will be increased thereby reducing unemployment in the area and providing access to an earned income. The project will also provide training, skills and experience to local people enabling them to improve their chances of gaining employment.